PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION OF MANUSCRIPTS IN THE LIBRARIES OF KARNATAKA: A STUDY

Synopsis submitted for approval of Registration of title to Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapura for the award of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

In

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

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2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO.
1	Introduction	3-5
2	Review of Literature	5
3	Statement of the Problem	6
4	Objectives of the study	6-7
5	Hypotheses	7-14
6	Scope and Limitations of the study	14-15
7	Methodology of the study	15
8	Tentative Scheme of Chapterisation	15-16
9	References	17-20

1. INTRODUCTION

Due to Information Communication Technology (ICT) has changed the entire scenario of selection, procurement, process and preservation of reading materials. With the help of ICT libraries can preserve the rare reading materials, which have national importance due to its rich heritage and values. There are innumerable number of manuscripts which have national importance but remain neglected due to apathetic approach of policies and government.

For historical research and for other scientific research manuscripts are useful as primary sources of information. They constitute a major source of information. Manuscripts are considered as an important collection documentary sources. Management of manuscripts is more difficult than the management of books collection. Before usage of paper and other manuscripts early man used to write on stones. This is called as rock age art. As civilization developed man has invented other materials for writing, they will in the form of palm leaves and birch – bark. It is very difficult to say when the palm leaf was first used as writing material. It is almost certain that some of the earlier works have been completely destroyed. This is to be expected because of extreme climatic conditions of India. Before introduction of paper, sometime in the century A.D palm leaves and brich-bark, wooden panels and cloth fabrics were the important writing materials. The literature available on manuscripts is useful for research scholars and archaeologists for their research work and to know about early mankind. Most of existing ancient manuscripts are written on parchment or paper.

There are three main ancient languages in India i.e Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit. Indian ancient history or literature has been written in these languages. The scriptures and other holy books of Hindus has been written in Sanskrit , such as

Vedas, Brahman Granthas, Upanishad, Ramayana, Mahabharat, Ayurveda Granths, Shilpa Shastras etc. Buddhist and Jain literature has been written in Pali and Prakrit languages.

In the context of archaeology, the term manuscript is defined as any early writing made stone, metal, wood, clay, linen, bark, leaves of trees and prepared skins of animals. Before the introduction of printing, all the individual great works were available in manuscripts form. So, manuscripts include all types of early writing, which are not printed and published. In other words, hand writings of any kind whether on paper or any other material in contradiction to printed materials are called manuscripts.

A book, composition or any other document, written by hand not mechanically produced.

There are different types of manuscripts are available like palm leaf manuscripts, Birch Bark and Paper Manuscripts.

In the present day, the valuable heritage has been subjected to gross recklessness and is under deteriorating condition. Some efforts have been made for their preservation by National Archives of India, Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, Manuscripts Mission of India and some social and religious institutions. These efforts are very meagre and nominal.

The maintenance of the manuscripts in the libraries is not satisfactory and most of them are in need of conservation. For conservation of all these rare manuscripts, constant efforts are required and these efforts should be in the shape of conservation treatment. Nevertheless, before contemplating any action, it is necessary to analyse and to understand what really the situation is, what is the magnitude of the problem and what are the really the situation is, what is the

magnitude of the problem and what are the likely solutions. But so far no worthwhile attempt has been made to study this problem.These manuscripts constitute the treasure house of wisdom and knowledge on different aspects of history, culture, artistic and architectural legacy of world. As the manuscripts are organic in nature, it is quite natural that after some time these manuscripts get deteriorated, due to physical and climatic conditions. Hence, proper preservation and organization of these written heritages of mankind is quite unavoidable.

It is enriching to note that interest in old manuscripts and their aesthetic and scientific value is growing day by day and it is also worth stressing that public access to old manuscripts and archive holdings causes a substantially quicker disintegration of these originals. Hence, the solution is to limit or discontinue public access to the originals and offer an alternative way of accessing them. One of the tried and tested ways of doing this is through the use of computer technology that enables the digitization of manuscripts an urgent case, because digitization is aprocess that tries to replace the original manuscripts with a facsimile.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The study of review of literature is an important aspect in any research through which one understand the past trends in research output in any particular discipline. A review is significant step to get clear picture of what has been done and suggested already with regard to problem understanding. The attempt is to highlight the findings of the studies conducted related to this topic which helps to undertake the present study in a systematic manner.

To review the past studies we have consulted the Library and Information Abstracts (LISA), Library and Information Science Technology Abstracts

(LISTA), Emerald Journals, Indianjournals.com and others sources likes Books, Journals etc.

Janecki, Jessica(2017): In 1898, the Trinity College Historical Society began collecting the first newspapers that would become the foundation of the Rubenstein Rare Book and ManuscriptLibrary's historical print newspaper collection. In recent decades, these newspapers lay underdescribed and largely inaccessible in a Rubenstein alcove. Impending renovation forced action, and in 2012 a three-year, multidepartment project to describe and house the collection was launched. In January 2016, the project successfully concluded, providing for the first time intellectual and physical control of the collection. Four years worth of circulation data show steady and consistent usage on par with the greater Rubenstein collection.

Sahoo, Jyotshna and Mohanty, Basudev (2015) India has the distinction of having one of the most ancient, richest and largest collections of manuscripts in the world. These manuscripts which are available in different forms, languages, scripts and cover a wide range of subjects are a powerful medium for the preservation of Indian cultural heritage. But the preservation of these manuscripts is a serious problem for the custodians of manuscripts because of the hot and humid climate of the country. In this context the present paper gives an account of the commendable efforts rendered by the National Mission for Manuscripts since its inception in 2003 by establishing and strengthening 57 manuscript resource centres, 50 manuscript conservation centres and developing a National Database of Manuscripts. It also presents the current status of digitization of Indian cultural heritage in the form of manuscripts starting from its collection to the development of a Digital ManuscriptLibrary for global access.

Nero, Lorraine M(2015) examines the indexing method used by Caribbean libraries to describe special collections and manuscripts. Various types of finding aids spanning 1960-2014 are used to show the pattern of descriptions adopted by the librarians. At the same time, the factors which have sustained the approach at national libraries and university libraries are highlighted. The paper concludes that while the indexing approach may be labour-intensive, this practice is perceived as developing a national and regional documentary heritage. The materials used for this study are primarily accessible to the public inclusive of published guides and online databases. The literature is replete with theories and cases from places such as the UK, the USA and Australia, this paper presents a perspective on the development of archival description in the Caribbean.

Bohm, Tomas (2014) The National Library of the Czech Republic, which was founded in 1773 by the Austrian Empress Maria Theresa, is one of the oldest National Libraries in Europe. It has been through various organizational changes incorporating other libraries and institutions. In addition to providing traditional library service, the library is active in such fields as digitization, paper documents restoration and preservation, refurbishment of its main seat in the baroque Klementinum building and international cooperation. The most important digitization project is the creation of the National Digital Libraryand the world's biggest digital manuscriptlibrary (Manuscriptorium), creation of the Web Archive, digitization of rare books in partnership with Google, formation of the repository for digitized Czech cultural heritage and, together with other main Czech libraries, work on the creation of the Czech Libraries Portal. The Library is further active in paper documents restoration and preservation where it is trying to tackle the problem of de-acidification as well as the formation of the physical Czech Depository Library and the Interdisciplinary Methodological Centre for Book Restoration and Conservation. The Library continues to serve its users during the

refurbishment of the Klementinum. It aims to create a modern library in baroque walls by the end of 2018.

Vasudevan, T. M.and Amrutha, K. G.(2011) conducted on study on three major libraries in Kerala. The paper stresses the need for preservation and conservation of manuscripts in manuscriptslibraries. It discusses the various techniques used in the preservation and conservation of manuscripts. It examines the causes of deterioration, existing preservation and conservation techniques, and constraints limiting effective preservation and conservation. The study revealed that oiling and cleaning of manuscripts are the most commonly used techniques. It also revealed that lack of training and inadequate funding was the most severe inhibitor to effective preservation and conservation.

Nazir, Tawfeeqand Bhat, Javaid Hussain (2014) said that Manuscripts are the links to the historical facts that will otherwise remain unknown to the world. They contain authentic information and facts about the social, political and cultural aspects of a nation. Marsiya or Elegy has gained more importance after the Martyrdom of Imam Hussain (a.s) and his companions and household in Karbala. Marsiya has been since written and recited in order to mourning the tragic events of Karbala. Many Marsiya manuscripts are available in different languages written during different times by many great writers and poets like Persian, Arabic, Urdu, Balti, Punjabi and Kashmiri. These Marsiya manuscripts are being used to be recited at different occasions especially during the month of Muharram-ul-Haram. Many of these Marsiya manuscripts are at the verge of extinction owning to need of preservation and conservation. The study had identifying and documenting some of the Kashmiri Marsiya manuscripts.

Qutab, Saima(2012) revealed that Pakistan is enriched with this treasure left by Muslims antecedents of the Indo-Pak Subcontinent. A number of institutional

and personal libraries hold a good number of manuscripts; especially on Islamic subjects and Quran collections. It is important to highlight the hidden and neglected state of these manuscripts for further research. This paper seeks to reveal the pervious and current status of the manuscripts in Pakistan. A broad picture of manuscripts in Pakistan will be presented through factual data. Governmental and professional efforts, awareness programs, state of digitization and access issues will be highlighted. Recommendations are given for considerations.

Ball, Heather F. (2011) Digital technologies have found a use in almost every aspect of scholarly research and communication. Though the Internet proves advantageous by increasing access, it can also be detrimental to researchers. By solely encountering medieval manuscripts through a computer screen, users sacrifice the visceral experience that accompanies viewing the actual manuscript. This article seeks to identify limitations and ethical implications encountered when digitizing medieval manuscripts.

Agrawal, O. P. (2010) offers information on the conservation of birch-bark manuscripts in India. It says that the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) is active for its preservation. It discusses various conservation techniques for the manuscripts such as water solution for removing stain and mounting the documents to a microscope slides for storation. Moreover, preservation cultural heritage of India is vital but there are more important issues that must be addressed seriously.

Mingjie Li and Jinfang Niu(2010) aims to provide a theoretical guide for preserving ancient books in China. The paper reviews the history of the damage and preservation of ancient books in China, and analyzes the value attributes of ancient books: archaeological value, historical value and artistic value. The paper

proposes a preservation framework for Chinese ancient books. This framework is composed of three layers. The foundation layer is to preserve the physical entity of ancient books so that the archaeological values are preserved. The middle layer is to preserve the intellectual content of ancient books so that the values for historical research are preserved. The top layer is mainly about preserving the productions process of the artistic format of ancient books, so that not only the static artistic formats are preserved, the techniques and procedures to produce the artistic format are preserved as well. The paper presents a framework that connects the value attributes of ancient books and the strategies to preserve those values, systematizes them and presents them as a whole. The framework can be used to justify government policies and help identify pitfalls in the preservation strategies for ancient books.

Ganesan, Sundar (2010) The article focuses on preservation efforts for books and related materials of Roja Muthiah Research Library (RMRL) in Tamil Nadu, India. It states that RMRL collections were once urged to be moved to the University of Chicago, yet, it was retained in Tamil Nadu due to its overt Indian nature. It tells that the collection reflects the nature of the Indian culture and heritage on various fields such as folklore and medicine which spans over a period of 200 years. It says that the Microfilming of Indian Publications Project (MIPP) was undertaken by India, the U.S. and the Library of Congress with the effort of saving RMRL manuscripts through microfilming. However, it notes that lack of funds and the tropical climate have contributed to the loss of important materials.

Galbraith, Thomas and Seago, Ann-Louise (2009) discusses the mitigation techniques that must be considered by libraries and collectors in the conservation of rare books and manuscripts. These techniques include maintenance of adequate humidity and temperature levels and implementation of theft prevention measures.

The significant roles of storage facilities in protecting cultural artifacts are mentioned.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The maintenance and conservation of manuscripts is a challenging task for the manuscripts libraries, constant efforts are required for conservation of rare manuscripts. It is necessary to analyse and understand the present situation of the manuscripts library, hence we have undertaken the study as **"Preservation and Conservation of Manuscripts in the Libraries of Karnataka: A study".**

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To ascertain the number and nature of manuscript collections and find out the relation of the number and nature of manuscripts with the type of libraries.
2. To study the language and scripts used in the manuscripts available in the libraries.
3. To determine the subjects of the manuscripts.
4. To study the procurement policy adopted for the manuscript in libraries.
5. To investigate the extent of care and techniques of preservation provided of manuscripts collections.
6. To study the steps taken by different institutions for the process of digitization of manuscripts.
7. To find out the steps taken for the publication of manuscripts.

5. HYPOTHSES

1. There is no uniform relation of the number and nature of manuscripts with the type of libraries.
2. There is no difference in the procurement policy adopted for the manuscripts in different libraries.

3. There is no standardisation in the system of processing, scheme of classification and catalogue code adopted for the organization of manuscripts.
4. There is no consistency in the extent of care and techniques of preservation provided for the manuscripts collections in the libraries.
5. The steps taken by different institution for the process of digitization of manuscripts are not homogeneous.

6. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study includes 25 Iindological libraries of Karnataka, which have rare manuscripts in their possession. These rare manuscripts preservation is a difficult task and the manuscripts are extremely fragile in nature, aggravated by physical and climatic conditions and lack of facilities for proper storage and some institutions have been scrupulously endeavouring to take into its possession these rare manuscripts from private individuals. The establishment of Indian trust for Art and Cultural Heritage has brought remarkable developments in the state of art of manuscript preservation and in creating awareness among manuscript keepers. The launching of National Mission for Manuscripts is another milestone in the field of conservation of documentary heritage.

In this context, the present study is an attempt to know the state of the art as practiced in the manuscript librarianship in Karnataka. The study is focused only on the Karnataka manuscript libraries and the study is made on procurement, preservation and maintenance of manuscript repositories.

7. METHODOLOGY

The present effort is fact-finding survey based study to assess the preservation and conservation of Manuscripts in the libraries of Karnataka. The

entire study is based on scientific principles of research methodology as well as various assumptions of different theories validated from time to time. The Researcher has made use of survey method of research for the present study. The survey method of research was very useful and helpful in collecting the reliable and useful data. Survey research technique can save time and money without sacrificing efficiency, accuracy and information adequacy in the research process. The information was collected systematically and comprehensively through primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected through questionnaire, personal interview and observation of college libraries by personal visits. The secondary source of data was collected from journal articles, books, reports and mainly through internet.

The primary data has been collected through Questionnaire and it is used as a tool for data collection. The structured questionnaires were used and distributed to the manuscript libraries of Karnataka and the collected data has been analysed by using statistical tools like percentile, descriptive statistics, graphs, diagrams and chi-square tests for testing the hypotheses of the study.

8. CHAPTERISATION

The research study is divided into five chapters,

Chapter -1: Introduction

The chapter 1 justify the present status of the manuscript libraries around the world and India in specific. It also details about the concepts of the problem, statement of the problem, scope and limitations of the study, objectives and hypotheses of the study.

Chapter -2: Review of Literature

This chapter will provide a brief review of related literature on manuscript libraries around the world.

Chapter – 3: Manuscript Libraries Genesis

This chapter deals with the genesis of manuscript libraries around the world and India. It also deals with the history and development of manuscript libraries, procurement policy, preservation of documents, and digitization of manuscripts in the libraries of Karnataka.

Chapter – 4: Analysis and Interpretation of Data

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of collected data from various manuscript libraries of Karnataka. This is most important chapter to ascertain with different characteristics of manuscripts as well as to aware with the system of organization and techniques of conservation as practiced in the manuscript libraries of Karnataka.

Chapter – 5: Summary Findings, suggestions, recommendations and conclusion

This chapter deals with the summary of Findings, suggestions, recommendations and conclusion.

The theses conclude with a references, bibliography and appendix.

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